NPS Form 10-900
(3-82)

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Exp. 10-31-84

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

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date entered

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic Clarendon Congregational Church

and or common Old Brick Church

2. Location

street & number Middle Road N/A not for publication

city, town Clarendon N/A vicinity of

state Vermont code 50 county Rutland code 021

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
___ district	___ public	X occupied	___ agriculture	___ museum
X building(s)	X private	___ unoccupied	___ commercial	___ park
___ structure	___ both	___ work in progress	___ educational	___ private residence
___ site	**Public Acquisition**	**Accessible**	___ entertainment	X religious
___ object	N/A in process	X yes: restricted	___ government	___ scientific
	___ being considered	___ yes: unrestricted	___ industrial	___ transportation
		___ no	___ military	___ other:

4. Owner of Property

name Clarendon Congregational Church, Inc.

street & number Middle Road

city, town North Clarendon N/A vicinity of state Vermont 05759

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Office of the Town Clerk

street & number Middle Road

city, town North Clarendon state Vermont 05759

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Vermont Historic Sites and Structures Survey has this property been determined eligible? ___ yes X no

date 1976 ___ federal X state ___ county ___ local

depository for survey records Vermont Division for Historic Preservation

city, town Montpelier state Vermont 05602

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one
___ excellent	___ deteriorated	___ unaltered	X original site
X good	___ ruins	X altered	___ moved date _____
___ fair	___ unexposed		

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Clarendon Congregational Church stands at a corner of the Common in the hamlet of Clarendon, surrounded by the agricultural landscape of the Otter Creek valley. The Federal style brick building with a slate-shingled gable roof possesses an arcaded main (west) facade dominated by a pedimented entrance pavilion with twin pilastered and fanlighted doorways. A brick tower rises from the pavilion and culminates in a Gothic Revival-influenced broached spire that replaced (in 1881) the original two-stage octagonal belfry. Aside from twenty-over-twenty sash on the main facade, the windows have been refitted (also in the 1880s) with stained and etched glazing. The church retains intact its late nineteenth century appearance.

The Clarendon Congregational Church defines the northeast corner of the large rectangular Common surrounded by the scattered buildings that constitute the hamlet of Clarendon. Oriented perpendicular to the Common, the church overlooks a small graveyard on the west side of the Common and, beyond, the expansive agricultural bottomlands of the Otter Creek valley. The paved Middle Road traverses the Common between its southeast and northwest corners (the latter being opposite the church). Shaded by a few mature deciduous trees, the church grounds merge into the Common; both are bounded on the north by the open field of a nearby farmstead.

The modestly scaled church consists of a one-story brick block of rectangular plan; a bell tower and spire rise above the main (west) facade. The exterior walls are laid up in seven-course American bond; the door and window openings are trimmed with marble sills. The moderately pitched gable roof is shingled with bluish-gray slate; a chimney with concrete coping flanks the tower on each slope. The building stands on a mortared rubble foundation.

The church gains its architectural distinction largely from the predominantly Federal stylistic features of its symmetrically arranged four-bay main (west) facade. An arcaded and pedimented two-bay entrance pavilion projects forward from the main wall plane. Brick pilasters delineate the pavilion bays, supporting the slightly raised imposts of the semi-elliptical arches. Twin entrances occupy the shallow recessed bays; each entrance is comprised of double-leaf, six-panel doors surmounted by a semicircular fanlight. Slender reeded pilasters enframe each door and support the round-arched fanlight enframement whose reveal also displays a reeded surface. Reeded diamonds embellish the face of the fanlight enframement, which culminates in a sawtooth crown adjoining the brick intrados. Higher in the wall of each bay, a semielliptical fanlight lights the former choir loft above the vestibule. A projecting molded cornice outlines the pavilion's pediment; an oval marble datestone (1824) is set within the brick tympanum.

Flanking the pavilion, the main facade concludes in arcaded single bays lighted by large round-headed windows; each window consists of twenty-over-twenty sash headed by a semicircular transom with intersecting tracery. The horizontal return of the roof cornice abuts the pavilion eaves.

The brick base stage of the central tower projects forward from the main wall plane, displacing the gable peak. Its west face displays a painted (white) clock face with Roman numerals and hands indicating 10:47 (possibly intended to remind parishioners of the usual 11:00 service). The base stage culminates in a frieze decorated with rosettes below the molded cornice.

A flush-boarded broached spire surmounts the base stage and contains the belfry. Above each face of the base stage, a jerkin gable provides a triangular belfry opening whose scalloped louvers are enframed by scroll-sawn bargeboards with fleur-de-lis motifs; a finial rises from each jerkinhead. The octagonal spire tapers upward to a metal finial also executed in a fleur-de-lis motif.

The four-bay north and south eaves elevations of the church lack the arcading of the west facade but share its molded cornice. The round-arched windows contrast with those on the west front, having large etched central panes and sidelights headed by semicircular stained and leaded transoms.

The rear (east) gable elevation possesses a similar window in each side bay. In the center, an arch and marble sill remain to define the higher position of an infilled window. The rear wall terminates in cropped raking eaves.

The relatively plain interior of the church is entered through a vestibule corresponding in width to the pavilion. A south stair ascends to the former choir loft above the vestibule. Twin east doorways lead to the side aisles of the auditorium.

Flanked by the aisles, a raised choir platform projects forward from the rear (west) wall to a paneled front rail; a nineteenth-century Estey organ built in Brattleboro, Vermont stands among the choir benches. Pews with paneled benchends and scrolled armrests occupy most of the main floor; those between the aisles are divided by a central partition. In the front (east) corners of the room, the pews are arranged perpendicularly to face the central dais bearing the low paneled pulpit.

Flush-boarded wainscoting partially sheathes the plastered walls, rising to the height of the window sills. Both the windows and the doors have shouldered architrave surrounds. The ceiling is sheathed with multi-patterned stamped metal; at the center, a wheel of embossed torches radiates from the hub of the electrified metal chandelier.

The original exterior appearance of the Clarendon Congregational Church differed in two significant respects. The more dramatic involved the bell tower, whose present broached spire was erected in 1881 atop the original base stage. The previous belfry consisted of an octagonal bell chamber of open framework surmounted by a reduced, partly open upper stage closely surrounded by a balustrade and terminating in a bellcast cap. The other significant change of appearance involved the windows on the north, east, and south elevations. The original twenty-over-twenty sash were replaced in the 1880s by the present stained and etched glazings. On the east elevation, a central window originally occupied a higher position in the wall than the extant side-bay windows; that window was infilled with brick probably during the 1858-59 renovation of the church.

The interior of the church also differed somewhat in its original appearance. The space above the vestibule was an open choir loft until 1858-59, when the rear wall of the auditorium was extended upward to the ceiling and the choir was shifted to its present main-floor platform. The original pulpit and sounding board were removed during the same renovation. The coved plaster ceiling remaining over the closed choir loft indicates the original form and material of the main ceiling; it was sheathed with the existing stamped metal in 1901.

Immediately to the rear (east) of the church stands the Parish Hall, constructed in 1955 on the former site of the church's horse sheds. The one-story, wood-framed and clapboarded, gable-roofed building does not contribute to the historic character of the church.

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below				
___ prehistoric	___ archeology-prehistoric	___ community planning	___ landscape architecture	___ religion	
___ 1400–1499	___ archeology-historic	___ conservation	___ law	___ science	
___ 1500–1599	___ agriculture	___ economics	___ literature	___ sculpture	
___ 1600–1699	_X_ architecture	___ education	___ military	___ social/ humanitarian	
___ 1700–1799	___ art	___ engineering	___ music	___ theater	
_X_ 1800–1899	___ commerce	___ exploration/settlement	___ philosophy	___ transportation	
___ 1900–	___ communications	___ industry	___ politics/government	___ other (specify)	
		___ invention			

Specific dates 1824 **Builder/Architect** unknown

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Clarendon Congregational Church constitutes a distinctive expression of the early nineteenth-century Federal style religious architecture of rural Vermont. The modest brick church was erected in 1824 at the hamlet of Clarendon Flats in the overwhelmingly agricultural township, whose population reached its historical peak in 1810. The parish experienced a resurgence in the 1880s, during which the church received its simplified Gothic Revival broached spire and stained glass windows. Subsequent decline of Clarendon's population caused a 1926-35 hiatus of regular church usage; a post-1960 upsurge has enabled a recent restoration of year-round services. The church's appearance continues to reflect directly the parish resurgence of a century earlier.

Settlement of Clarendon township began in 1768-69 and proceeded rapidly during the remainder of the eighteenth century. The fertile bottomlands of the Otter Creek valley provided the chief attraction, and a small hamlet began to emerge at Clarendon Flats. By the turn of the century, Clarendon became the leading town in Rutland County; its population reached 1797 in 1810, the historical maximum not exceeded until one and a half centuries later.

The lack of a suitable meetinghouse at the Flats lead to the formation in January 1822 of the Second Religious Society in the East Part of Clarendon; a month later, the Congregational Church of Christ in Clarendon was established. The principals of the Church were the Rev. Henry Hunter, a resident Evangelist, and the Rev. Stephen Martindale of adjacent Tinmouth township. A public subscription of funds for the construction of a meetinghouse raised $1,787 by January 1824 - more precisely, $1,678 and "The lime for the Meeting House if it does not exceed 400 bushels at 25 cents per bushel." The Federal style brick church was erected later that year although scant record exists of the actual construction.

Meanwhile the rapid expansion of Clarendon's population and economic activity barely outlasted the eighteenth century. By 1820 the population began the steady contraction that would persist for a century. Not even the opening of two railroads through the township around 1850 checked the decline. A new commercial and industrial center was emerging in adjacent Rutland at the junction of the railroads, and they served to siphon such activities away from Clarendon and the other surrounding towns.

Nevertheless the church seems to have fared better than the circumstances would suggest. In 1858-59, the building was extensively refurbished; the "singer's gallery" above the vestibule was closed, the pulpit was replaced, and the sounding board was removed. The church's forty "slips" (pews) were auctioned to raise the $1,200 expended for the work. A decade later, the present 800-pound bell was installed in the original tower at a cost of over $300.

The church received its most significant alterations during the vigorous pastorate of the Rev. George H. Morss (1876-1886). At a meeting in July 1881, the Society approved the installation of stained glass memorial windows (not to exceed twelve) in place of the original clear sash. The chief decision taken at that meeting involved the replacement of the church's belfry; the plan submitted by Milo Lyman of Rutland for a new broached spire was accepted. Nicholas M. Powers, the renowned builder of covered bridges who lived across the Common from the church, was engaged to construct the new spire later the same year; its cost amounted to $668.

By the turn of the century, Clarendon's steadily declining population (the 1900 census showed 915 residents) must have had an effect on the church. However in 1901 the Society decided to have stamped metal sheathing applied to the ceiling. The town's population reached its lowest level in the 1920 census of only 826. Six years later, dwindling resources forced the Society to suspend regular services at the church. A hiatus of nine years ensued.

The reopening of the church occurred in June 1935, largely through the efforts of two Clarendon natives, Henry H. Eddy and Professor Robert Seneca Smith of the Yale Divinity School. Professor Smith arranged to have a capable divinity student serve the church each summer as temporary pastor. The inexpensive arrangement proved successful and continued for four decades after Smith's death in 1939.

Clarendon's population began to rebound after 1940, and increased about fifty per cent during the 1960s alone. The reviving strength of the parish enabled the construction in 1955 of a Parish Hall behind the church on the former site of the horse sheds. Circumstances continued to improve during succeeding years, culminating in the 1979 decision by church members to restore year-round services and a resident minister. In 1983, the original Second Religious Society in the East Part of Clarendon and the Congregational Church of Christ in Clarendon were formally merged to become the Clarendon Congregational Church, Inc.

The church building now retains almost exactly the appearance created by the alterations of the 1880s. Below the spire, the west facade displays its original Federal design embellished with vernacular decorative elements whose slight irregularity reveals their hand-cut origin. The broached spire represents both a physical and figurative culmination of the church's architectural evolution, showing the influence of the Gothic Revival in its scroll-sawn ornament. This blend of features effectively conveys a sense both of the church's historical origin and its later nineteenth century resurgence.

9. Major Bibliographical References

See Continuation Sheet 5.

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property 0.6

Quadrangle name Rutland, Vt. Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UTM References

	Zone	Easting	Northing
A	18	663980	4820170
B			
C			
D			
E			
F			
G			
H			

Verbal boundary description and justification

See Continuation Sheet 6.

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	N/A	code	county	code
state		code	county	code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title	Hugh H. Henry		
organization	Historic Preservation Consultant	date	January 1984
street & number	Green Mountain Turnpike	telephone	802-875-3379
city or town	Chester	state	Vermont 05143

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

___ national X state ___ local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer signature Ernie Gilbertson

title Director, Vermont Division for Historic Preservation date June 4, 1984

For NPS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

date

Keeper of the National Register

Attest: date

Chief of Registration

1. Beers, F. W. Atlas of Rutland County, Vermont. New York, 1869.

2. Clarendon, Vermont 1761-1976. Rutland, Vt.: Academy Books, 1976?

3. Manual of the Congregational Church 1822-1922, The Centennial Anniversary. Rutland, Vt., 1922? (Booklet)

4. Smith, H. P., and W. S. Rann, eds. History of Rutland County, Vermont. Syracuse, N. Y.: D. Mason and Co., 1886.

5. Weeks, N. Wendell. The Old Brick Church. Clarendon, Vt., 1980. (Mimeographed booklet)

6. Records of the Clarendon Congregational Church held by the Clerk, (Mrs.) Gladys Congdon, Middle Road, Clarendon, Vermont.

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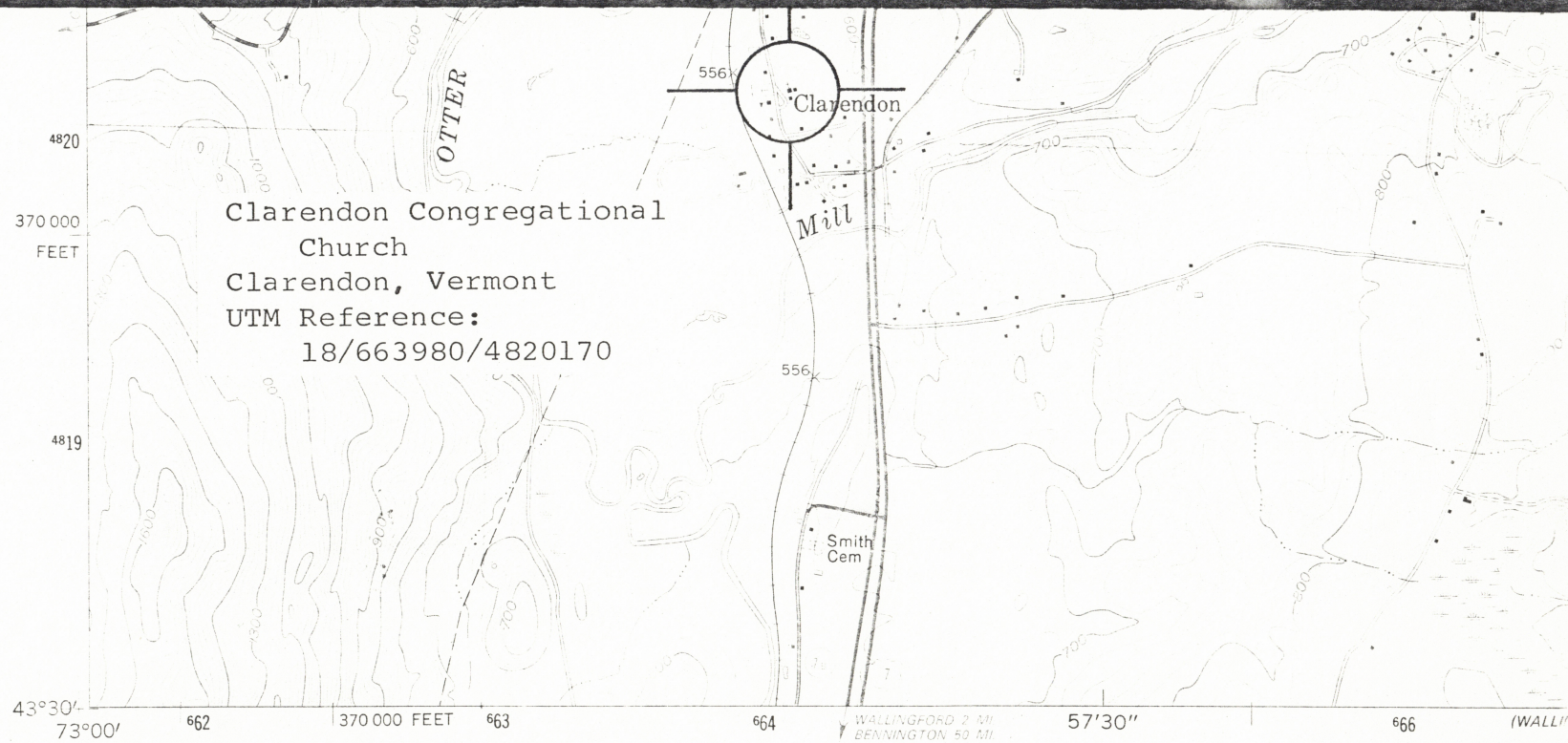
The nominated property consists of the Clarendon Congregational Church and its rectangular lot of 12 rods (198 feet) by 8 rods (132 feet) extending along the east side of Middle Road. The deed to the property is recorded in Book 9, Page 499 of the Clarendon Land Records. The boundaries correspond to the original lot sold in 1824 by Caleb Hall to the Second Religious Society in the East Part of Clarendon "for the purpose of erecting a Meeting house thereon," and are sufficient to enclose and protect the historic resource.



6370 I NE
(MIDDLETOWN SPRINGS)

Mapped, edited, and published by the Geological Survey

Control by USGS and NOS/NOAA

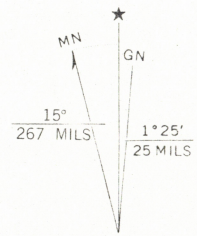
Topography by photogrammetric methods from aerial photographs taken 1957. Field checked 1961

Polyconic projection. 10,000-foot grid ticks based on Vermont coordinate system. 1000-meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid ticks, zone 18, shown in blue. 1927 North American Datum. To place on the predicted North American Datum 1983 move the projection lines 3 meters south and 36 meters west as shown by dashed corner ticks

Fine red dashed lines indicate selected fence and field lines where generally visible on aerial photographs. This information is unchecked

Red tint indicates area in which only landmark buildings are shown

There may be private inholdings within the boundaries of the National or State reservations shown on this map



UTM GRID AND 1980 MAGNETIC NORTH DECLINATION AT CENTER OF SHEET

SCA

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1000 0 1000 2000

1 5

CONTOUR I
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A FOLDER DESCRIBING TOPOGRAPHIC M